

**Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes
First Floor Conference Room, Town Hall
Thursday, January 22, 2015, 7:30 p.m.**

PRESENT: Betsey Anderson, Anne Bickford, Steve Hagan, Joanna Nickerson, Ed Pierce, and Jan Shepard

ALSO PRESENT: Human Resources/Management Analyst Sarah Buhler

ABSENT: Polly Herz, Amy Lloyd, and Michael Rosenberg

Committee Chair Betsey Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of October 6, 2014

No vote was taken on the minutes from October 6th as there was an insufficient number of committee members present at the January 22nd meeting that were also present at the October 6th meeting. Those present did not bring forth any amendments to the minutes. The committee agreed to briefly meet prior to Annual Town Meeting to vote on the minutes from October 6th and January 22nd.

2. Review of any proposed changes to bylaws

Ms. Anderson presented the committee with a draft amendment to the Bylaws, Article 30 Volunteer Coordinating Committee (VCC). Ms. Anderson explained that the proposed amendment would make Article 30 consistent with the Charter amendments relating to the VCC that were approved at Special Town Meeting. Two members would be added to the VCC to increase its total membership to five (5). The description of positions for which the VCC will recruit candidates would be revised to reflect current practice. The time period for which the VCC must supply a list of candidates to the appointing authority would be extended to sixty (60) days. In addition, the proposed bylaw amendment would eliminate reference to a specific number of volunteers that must be identified for each vacancy that exists.

In referencing the chart depicting the proposed language, it was noted that the term “subcommittees” was changed to “appointees” prior to the amendment being approved at Special Town Meeting.

Mr. Hagan made a motion to recommend amendment to Article 30 Volunteer Coordinating Committee as proposed. Ms. Bickford seconded the motion.

The motion passed 6-0-0.

Ms. Nickerson mentioned that Section 2-7 Petitioners’ Warrant Articles would be clearer if it is specified that ten signatures of registered voters are required in order to insert a petitioners’ article into the warrant. The current language only refers to ten signatures. Ms. Nickerson stated that it is important to provide clear guidance to people that wish to

insert articles in the warrant and this suggestion should be noted for the next review of the Charter.

Ms. Shepard noted that the committee previously discussed a potential amendment to the Bylaws that would limit the number of consecutive terms an individual may serve as chair.

Ms. Anderson stated that for some committees, being chair is thought of as a daunting position because of the amount of work involved. Also, it might discourage some potential committee members from volunteering if they know they must be chair someday.

Mr. Hagan argued that some individuals could be discouraged from joining some committees because they know that the chair will not change.

Ms. Shepard suggested that specifying a certain number of consecutive terms, such as three or five, might be beneficial as it can take a few years to learn about a committee before someone feels comfortable with being chair.

A brief discussion ensued regarding whether a Bylaw amendment would affect change if there are no consequences for those that choose not to rotate the chair. The committee also discussed vetting the issue through the Selectmen and reviewing the issue with the other members of the Charter Review Committee prior to recommending any amendments.

Ms. Shepard suggested that it might be best for this issue to be addressed by the Selectmen, not necessarily by writing it into the Bylaws, but as a strong directive to all committees and boards.

The merits of establishing a term limit of two versus three consecutive years as chair were discussed.

Mr. Hagan made a motion to recommend amendment to Section 5.6 Organization of Elected Boards and Committees and Section 5.7 Appointed Boards and Committees by adding language to limit a chair's term to two (2) consecutive years. Ms. Bickford seconded the motion.

The motion failed 3-3-0, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Shepard and Ms. Nickerson voted against.

3. Final Vote on Charter amendments March 14, 2015

Ms. Anderson stated that the Charter amendments that passed at the Special Town Meeting will be on the ballot for the March 14th election. If the Charter Amendments fail at the Town Election, then the proposed change to Article 30 of the Bylaws will be indefinitely postponed at the Annual Town Meeting.

4. Other business

The committee discussed drafting an article to send to the *Bedford Citizen* or *Bedford Minuteman* explaining the process of voting at the Town Election for the amendments that were approved at Special Town Meeting. It was suggested that a brief summary of each Charter amendment accompany the article.

Ms. Nickerson made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bickford seconded the motion.

The motion passed 6-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Minutes approved as written March 23, 2015